KOLCHAK'S OWN STORY OF COUP THAT MADE HIM DICTATOR TOLD AT SIX-DAY TRIAL THAT RESULTED IN HIS EXECUTION

ILL-FATED DESPOT

SIBERIAN VENTURE NOW REVEALED AS INTRIGUE OF ALLIES

Overthrow of Directorate by Russian Admiral Followed Dramatic Playing of "Czar's Hymn" -- Wholesale Executions That Followed Plot Engineered by British General Knox Aroused Russians in Favor of Bolsheviki-Kolchak. Whom England and France Were on Verge of Recognizing, Made Fatal Flight.

THE Washington Times presents herewith the real, hitherto untold story of Admiral Kolchak; how he was made dictator of Siberia by the allies in the hope of crushing the Soviet government, his meteoric career, his capture by the Bolsheviki and his tragic death. It is virtually Admiral Kolchak's own story. The narrative is compiled from stenographic notes made at the six-day trial of the ill-fated dictator, in which he told frankly the full details of his perilous adventures. The notes were obtained by Karl H. Von Wiegand, staff correspondent of the New York American at Berlin, from Czecho-Slovakian officers and the Gzech stenographer at the trial, who smuggled out of

ficers and the Gzech stenographer at the trial, who smuggled out of Siberia the official transcript of the testimony. These notes were thereafter translated and edited by Herman Bernstein, the celebrated in-ternational journalist. Mr. Bernstein was in Siberia at the time Kolchak was proclaimed dictator, and supplies important data to simplify

This first article, strangely enough, is given to the world almost four years to the day since the overthrow of the Kerensky regime and the establishment of the Soviet government of Russia, which has held power since, and three years since Admiral Kolchak, by a coup d'etat, on November 18, 1918, engineered by the British General Knox at Omsk,

By HERMAN BERNSTEIN.

THIS is the story of the last days of Admiral Kolchak. I the "dictator" of Siberia. For a time he was the white hope of both the Russian liberals and the reactionaries outside of Russia. In the foreign offices of some of the allied powers he was looked upon as the only savior of Russia from the hands of the Bolsheviki. He was almost recognized by the allies during the peace con-

Then suddenly, after a series of exaggerated victories, came his collapse as a military force, his flight, his trial' by a revolutionary commission, and finally his execution. With the passing of Admiral Kol- +

ship at first.

anti-Bolshevist front.

ported the idea of a military dictator-

The Czecho-Slovak council in

Siberia, on the other hand, criticized

the coup d'etat and pointed out that

the everthrow of the democratic

government by means of violence

and the naming of a dictator weak-

ened rather than strengthened the

Siberia remained about 5,000 miles

away from the front. When I cross-

ed Siberia and came to the front, at

Ekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk, I

found there just one American offi-

cer, Major Slaughter, who was

traveling about as a military ob-

On the way across Siberia I saw

many old men, women and children,

ing aimlessly, huddled together in

cold and filthy box cars. I saw

many hungry and ragged refugees

living in caves underground, in the

outskirts of the Siberian capital,

Omsk. I also saw poorly-clad small

detachments of Italian, French and

British troops here and there, in

Harbin, Manchuria and Omsk, on

their way to the front which was

held at that time by the Czecho-

monarchist machinations of the

former Russian officers and various

adventurous self-styled Hetmans.

Shortly before the armistice Ad-

miral Kolchak, who was then min-

ister of war in the Siberian gov-

ernment, called on the president

of the directorate, M. Avxentieff.

and informed him that the British

military representative, General

Knox, had arrived in Omsk. He

suggested that President Avxon-

tieff call on the general to pay his

respects, adding that the general

could be very useful to the gov-

"I am the president and it seems

to me that it would be no more

than right that the military repre-

sentatives accredited to this gov-

ernment should call on the presi-

dent first," replied M. Axvensett.

Admiral Kolchak agreed with the

president and said that he would

arrange to have General Knox call

On the following day General

Knox called on President Axven-

Wanted Chernoff Killed

I know from an indisputably au-

thoritative source that, in sub-

stance, the following conversation

took place between the British

military representative and the

president of the directorate on that

"Mr. President, I should like to

know why you have not yet order-

er the shooting of Victor Chernoff.'

agriculture in the Kerensky gov-

ernment. He was also elected

Victor Chernoff was minister of

on M. Axventieff first.

General Knox said:

Everywhere I was told about the

Slovak troops

ernment.

occasion:

starving and freezing refugees, drift-

chak ended the period of military dictatorship in Siberia. Siberia was thrown back into the arms of the Bolsheviki by the untold repressions and terrorism practiced under the Kolchak regime. Here and there new anarchy broke loose as a result of the crimes of the various charlatans and adventurers of the Semyonoff and Kalmikoff type, masquerading as Russian patriots.

Made Dictator by Coup

The story of the end of Kolchak is intensely dramatic. It sheds new light on the history of the clumsy and futile policy of intervention through which allied military experts and statesmen have helped to keep Russia in a state of chaos and confusion, thus practically bringing on the present tragic plight of the Russian people, with King Hunger stalking mercilessly over the great land so rich in food and natural resources.

Admiral Kolchak was only a marionette in the hands of monarchist officers and schemers for the restoration of the Romanoff dynasty, a week-willed tool of some of the allied military representatives in Siberia. Perhaps well-meaning at first, eager to save Russia according to his own lights, he was a pathetic little dictator who did not know how to dictate-and he helped to ruin Russia instead of saving her.

I was in Siberia as a war correspondent when Admiral Kolchak was made dictator by a serio-comic coup d'etat shortly after the armistice-on November 18, 1918. On armistice day I interviewed the president of the Directorate. Nicholas Avxentieff, and Vladimir Zenzinoff, a member of the Directorate, in Omsk. The Directorate was the government elected by the people, by the representatives of the Constituent Assembly who had gathered in Ufa.

It was indeed the most representative government Russia has yet had. Though practically all parties were represented in the government. most of the cabinet members belongd to the Socialist revolutionary party, and the policy of the govern ment was liberal, democratic and anti-Bolshevist. Nevertheless, some of the military envoys in Siberia regarded the directorate as too radical. They feared that it was too close to the Bolsheviki in its sympathies, and therefore they bent their efforts to undermine the government's influence and finally to overthrow it.

British Hand in Plot

General Knox, the military representative of Great Britain, and Admiral Kolchak was his choice for dictator. The head of the Czecho-Slovak armies in Siberia, the young General Gaida, was in sympathy with General Knox's plan and sup-

bly, which was dispersed by the Communists. He is a prominent leader of the left wing of the Socialist revolutionary party.

"I am amaged that you should ask me such a question," replied M. Axventieff. "Why do you think I should have ordered the shooting of Chernoff?"

"Because Chernoff is undermining the morale of the army at the front by his revolutionary proclamations. In time of war a man who would do the things Chernoff is doing would have been shot in England. And to maintain military discipline you should have him shot," declared General Knox

"Pardon me, general," replied President Avxentieff. "I must express my amasement again. I am astonished that you should come to me with such a request, particularly since I have not heard you express any criticism of the scandalous conduct of some of the monarchist officers who have repeatedly and openly manifested their Czaristic tendencies by singing 'God save the Czar,' and who are thus really undermining the morale of our army. I understand that you were present on several occasions when such incidents occurred, and I have not heard any complaint from you on that ground.

"May I suggest, general, that you leave the Chernoff matter to this government? We will deal with it as we see fit. This is an internal affair, and I understand that the Allies have given assurances that they have no intentions of interfering in any way with the internal affairs of Russia."

The interview closed abruptly, and General Knox went away displeased and angry. ,

Czar's Hymn a Spark

On November 18, 1918, a short time after this convergation, be: tween President Avxentieff and General Knox, the government of the people, the Directorate, was overthrown. The coup d'etat started with an epistle which in itself seemed trivial, but it resulted in the overthrow of the government and the naming of the dictator.

A detachment of French troops arrived in Omsk several days after the armistice. I saw the splendid reception that was accorded them upon their arrival. The station was decorated with Allied flags. A military parade took place and enthusiastic speeches of welcome were made. The Cossack regiment, commanded by Colonel Krasilnikov, the troops at the railroad station and the Cossack hurrahs resounded hilariously over the Siberian capital.

The officers of the French detachment were entertained by the Russian officers at a banquet the following evening. The civil au-

thorities arranged to give the French an official reception a day or two later. At the military banhymn as yet. quet in honor of the French offi-

ALEXANDER KOLCHAK, dictator of Siberia, whose

dramatic rise to power culminated in his execution fol-

lowing his reign of terror among the peasants of Russia.

dinner the allied representatives were called upon to speak.

cers were the allied consular and

military representatives. After the

The guests became confused and embarrassed. Some of the Allied representatives asked the toastmaster for an explanation. His answer was that the incident was of no political significance and that the Czar's hymn was played by the band in all probability because there was no new popular national

But after a brief pause the band resumed playing the Czar's hymn, guns as they played the sian national hymn.

On the following morning the Allied consular representatives held a hurried conference, and, without communicating with their governments, sent an ultimatum to the Directorate. They demanded an explanation of the incident within tweety-four hours. This precipitated the crisis.

The Directorate called a special conference for the purpose of considering the incident and the Allied demand. It was decided to place under arrest Colonel Krasilnikov and the officers involved in the scandal and to have them courtmartialed. The order was issued for their arrest immediately at the close of the conference.

prisoned them.

named dictator.

The members of the Directorate were soon released on the condition that they leave Siberia immediately. They were sent to Manchuria in a special train, under British guard. and were compelled to sign a paper to the effect that they would not engage in any agitation against the Kolchak government.

Immediately after the members

Chernoff Arrested

VILLAGES LOOTED BY DICTATOR'S OFFICERS IN REIGN OF TERROR

Men and Women Were Flogged in Market Places While Allied Statesmen Sought Official Recognition for the "White Hope" of Russia-Offenders Were Put to Death on Such a Tremendous Scope That Peasants Feared Bolsheviki Far Less Than They Did "Monarchists" Who Threw Swords Into Scales of Justice.

lence, pointing out that such a move would surely shake the confidence of the people in representative government and would deal a fatal blow to the army at the front.

The members of the Constituent Assembly were at first arrested, and there were rumors that they were to be shot. After a provokative explosion of a bomb, the Palais Royal in Ekaterinburg, where Chernoff and other members of the Constituent Assembly were staying, was surrounded by troops and Chernoff and some of his associates were captured. They were secretly removed in a special car to Chelyabinsk.

Their fate would have been sealed but for the Czecho-Blovak Council, who gave them protection.

Chernoff afterward succeeded in crossing the front and reaching Moscow. Some of the others escaped in disguise and went to Paris. A number of the members of the Constituent Assembly who remained in Siberia were afterward brutally murdered by Kolchak's subordinates.

About two weeks after the Kolchak coup d'etat I returned to Omsk and tried to interview the new dictator. His adjutant said that the admiral was extremely busy, and that I would have to wait at least three or four days before I could meet him. I asked the adjutant to tell Admiral Kolchak that I wanted the interview before 4 o'clock that day, and that unless I had the interview by that time I would not be interested in it. The adjutant soon re-

Interviews Kolchak

would receive me at once.

turned saying that the admiral

I asked him many questions which he answered quite frankly. He made the impression of a sympathetic but rather weak-willed man. He endeavored to convince me that he was democratic. He said that he considered himself only a temporary dictator, that his real aim was to lead the Russian people to a Constituent Assembly, which would then decide what form of government was best for Russia. He emphasized that he was not a monarchist.

He said that the directorate had been too radical and on too friendly terms with the Bolsheviki. He admitted to me that it would be a calamity if the Czecho-Slovaka deoided to leave the front at that time. He also declared that without allied aid in the form of war supplies, clothing and shoes, his armies would be unable to cope with the Bolshevist forces. I asked him:

"Then you are not in a stronger position than the overthrown directorate was?"

"I am not," he answered, "but with allied cooperation we could reorganize the army and within three months the Russian forces alone could defeat the Bolsheviki."

The events that followed during the next few months threw even the anti-Bolshevist elements in Siberia into the ranks of the Bolsheviki. A reign of terror prevailed. Members of the Constituent Assembly were murdered in cold blood. Villages were looted, pillaged and devastated by Kolchak's officers. Men and women were flogged in the market places.

Kolchak in Flight

Wholesale executions became a common occurrence. All this was going on while allied statesmen and military experts sought official recognition for the Kolchak government, on the ground that Kolchak was the "White Hope" of Russia.

These atrocities, sommitted by Kolchak's men, naturally furnished the Soviet government with a plausible justification that it was waging war on the Kolchak government which was working for the restoration of a monarchy in Russia. This served to strengthen the Bolsheviki. Even the anti-Bolshevist forces within Russia came to their aid against the monarchist aggressors. for the Russian people feared the monarchists even more than they feared the Bolsevikt.

of his political career had arrived.

he mastered himself quickly and remained calm throughout the period of his trial, and during his execution. The commission entered the next car where they found the premier of the Kolchak government. Pepelyayev was morose and utterly Soon the revolutionary commis-

regime came in the beginning of

1920. The dictator fled with a num-

On January 15, at about 7 o'clock

in the evening, Kolshak and his staff

were arrested at the railroad station

of Irkutsk by a special revolutionary

The commission arrived in auto-

mobiles at the shore of the Angara

river and crossed the frozen river

on foot. On the other side was the

Kolchak train, consisting of three

special cars and a refrigerator. The

commission was met by the Crech

commandant of the train, Borovitch,

who conducted them to the car oc-

cupied by Admiral Kolchak and the

officers who accompanied him. The

Czech commandant briefly and

calmly informed Admiral Kolchak

that this commission represented

the Revolutionary Political Center.

Calm at His Trial

Then, realizing that the last act

and was ill at ease for awhile.

Kolchak became greatly confused,

ber of members of his staff.

commission.

sion ordered the troops to guard the train. A company of workmen and peasants surrounded the train quietly and in orderly fashion. Admiral Kolchak and Premier Papelyayev were taken to the station, where they were subjected to a thorough search. While Kolchak was being searched, a woman named Anna Timirova appeared and offered to share Kolchak's fate, begging for permission to follow him to prison. The woman was also placed under arrest.

The commander of the national revolutionary army, Nesterev, gave the order, and surrounded by a detachment of revolutionary troops. Kolchak, Pepelyayev and Anna Timirova, started their march across the icebound Angara river. The remarkable procession moved slowly along the narrow path over the ice. There was the abandoned dictator who had suffered a complete flasco. the man who but yesterday was called the "Supreme Ruler of Russia," now a prisoner, and beside him walked the representatives of Russian democracy.

In the frosty air of a quiet winter midnight the pathetic figures of Kolchak and his associates appeared as symbols of the crumbled reactionary adventure that left behind a terrible trail of bloodshed.

On the other side of the river automobiles were waiting for the prisoners. The dictator and his premier were placed in separate cells. The heavy doors of the Kolchak cell closed behind him shortly after mid-

Dictator Executed

The doors opened ten times since then. Nine times they were opened during the nine days of the revolutionary trial. The tenth time they were opened when Kolchak was taken out and shot, on February 7,

The dramatic story of the last six days of the Klochak trial, during which he gave his testimony before the revolutionary tribunal, defending himself and his regime, revealing the part played by the Allies in the Siberian intervention, is contained in the stenographic report which was secured for The Washington Times by Karl von Wiegand, the New York American's correspondent in Berlin, from Czecho-Slovak officers and the Czech stenographer who was present at the trial, and who succeeded in smuggling out of Siberia a tran script of the remarkable testimony.

The following articles will contain Admiral Kolchak's own dramatic story of his rise and fall, as given by him in his sworn testimony before the revolutionary tribunal in Irkutsk several days before his execution.

[The second afticle of Mr. Berg stein's fascinating story will be published next Sunday.]

The Russian toastmaster led the as the representative of a demo-Directorate. speeches by an enthusiastic toast in cratic army he could not remain at the banquet any longer. He walked praise of France and England. The Allied representatives also lauded out demonstratively. Then some of

the valor of the French troops, when suddenly the speeches were interrupted by the playing of the old Russian national hymn, "God

repeating it six or seven times. The Szecho-Slovak representative, Captain Koshek, rose and said that

the Allied Consuls also left the hall. Finally, even the French officers walked out, as by that time the affair assumed the character of a

Later it was learned that Colonel Krasilnikov, the Cossack chief, and several of his officers, had forced the band to play "God Save the Czar" at the point of their revolvers. The musicians, pale and trembling, kept their eyes on the

> militarist spirit which made her a menace to the whole civilized world. monarchism-which is not yet assured-as a capitalist-militarist republic she can be as aggressively imperialistic as she was under the

> "It requires no great imagination to see that with Germany in control of the economic life of Russia in Europe, and possibly even of western Siberia, and Japan in control of the rest of Siberia, the result would be a menace to every democratically governed nation in the world.

governed by a reactionary monarchy not fall again under the rule of the liberal government, if her economic in the west and by Japan in the exercise political control over the a long time to come. There will nations, the league of democratic na-Japan is permitted to control Siberia, or if Russia is to be held Japanese combination, the aims for the great war will have been de-

Gulf, fust as Pan-Asianism is more

"Of course, the combination of Germany and Japan with Russia

would be still more formidable and dangerous; but even if Russia does reactionary monarchists and manages to establish and maintain a life is to be dominated by Germany east, and especially if Japan is to richest part of Siberia, the world will not be safe for democracy for be in effect two great leagues of tions against a stronger league of aggressive military nations. If in the relentless grip of a Germanthe attainment of which we entered feated.

dangerous than Pan-Germanism."

"The Prussia of the east is not less to be feared than her western prototype; her passion for aggrandizement is no less a menace to peaceful freedom-loving peoples. A

union of the two Prussias would be a serious setback to civilization. The imperialistic scheme of a political and economic union of these two great military powers, using Russia as a bridge to link Berlin to Tokyo. is more dangerous than the old menace of an empire stretching from the North Sea to the Persian

But Colonel Krasilnikov and the reactionary officers were prepared for the overthrow of the government. That night they surrounded the house of the president of the Directorate, where members of the government were in conference, and placed the head of the government

and his associates under arrest. They forced the members of the Directorate into motor case, led them away under military convoy and im-

Before dawn several members of the government hostile to the Directorate met and Kolchak was

of the Directorate had been banished a farcical trial was staged by Kolchak. The officers who had arrested the members of the government were assured immunity. All sorts of absurd charges were invented against Avxenteiff and Zenlinoff in their absence. They were accused of having been in conspiracy with the Bolsheviki, of having received 200,000,000 rubles from the Bolsheviki for propaganda, of having plotted to betray the army to the Bolsheviki. The trial, of course, ended in clearing the monarchist officers and in a violent denunciation of the members of the deposed

General Gaids, head of the Czecho-Slovak army in Ekaterinburg, at his headquarters located in the Yepaed, told me that he was in favor of Kolchak because he was convinced that only a military dictatorship could save Russia. But the Czecho-Slovak Council on that same day issued a statement denouncing the overthrow of the Directorate by vio-

JAPANIZED SIBERIA CONFERENCE TAT a deadlock may occur at "If Russia Is to Be Dominated in Her Economic

the forthcoming diarmament conference of the Powers in Washington, due to the demands of Japan for advantages at Russia's expense, is the opinion of John Spargo, the noted publicist. He declares that the central problem facing the conference will be found to be not China or Korea, but Siberia.

"Whether Siberia is to be dominated by the white race or the yellow race is the great question." said Mr. Spargo, "and upon the answer to that question will depend whether civilization for the next five centuries is to be dominated by the white man or the

"It has come to be recognized that nothing in the way of disarmament is possible until there is an entire readjustment of affairs in the Far East. We have approached pretty close to that definite challenge between the white and yellow races for supremacy which I have broadly sketched in my recent book, Russia as an American Moreover, the fact which I emphasized in my booknamely, that the maintenance of Siberia under non-Asiatic sovereignty is fundamental to our foreign policy-has now been recognized and is the pivot of our entire foreign policy.

"The logic of the situation which is set forth in my book is based upon the premise that across the prostrate form of Russia the two great militant Powers could join hands and control the resources and the fate of something like 700,000,000 people.

"Even if we leave out of account altogether the possibilities of political and military domination of Rus-

Life by Germany in the West and by Japan in Even if she does not return to the East and Especially if Japan Is to Exercise Political Control Over Siberia, the World Will Not Be Safe for Democracy." Says John Hohenzollerns. Spargo, Noted Publicist. sia by these two nations, an alliance

dominating Eastern' Europe and the whole of Asia, we must face the ossibility of an economic alliance. would be a perfectly natural arrangement for these two nations to unite upon an economic policy which would give to Germany the economic control of European Russia and to Japan the economic control of Asiatic Russia.

PRUSSIA OF THE FAR EAST.

"The story of Japan's aggression in China shows how fully she has earned the title of 'the Prussia of the Far East.' Taking advantage of the world war and the preoccupation and perif of her allies, she used the most unscrupulous means of advancing her own imperialistic aim to establish her hegemony in Asia. She has succeeded to a degree which brings the world face to face with a new peril, Pan-Nipponism, which is, potentially at any rate, far more dangerous to the whole civilized world than its prototype, Pan-Germanism, "That Japan is fully alive to the

great opportunities for expansion in Siberia is quite certain. To add Southeastern Siberia to her empire would be a tremendous step toward the fulfillment of her program of imperialist expansion, and at the same time a great check to the spread of European influence in Asia. It would, moreover, enable Japan to prevent Russia from ever sending troops by way of the Pacific to join with the forces of any other nation or nations. Mr. Spargo points out that both

the Germans and Japanese who have emigrated to Siberia have been quick to perceive and seize upon the economic advantages so numerous in this great land of unexploited treasure. It is Eastern Siberia, he says, which Japan wants to dominate and control chiefly for political considerations, which are subtly interwoven with her imperialistic policles and which form an important part of her military program.

"On the score of the contiguity of our own territory," he declares, "we have a very definite interest in preventing the occupation of Eastern Siberia by Japan, the one military power whose foreign policy is generally conceded to hold important elements of danger for us. It is no answer to this argument to tell us that Japan's occupation of Eastern Siberia would be temporary, or that it would be pacific and involve no military aim or effort. Japan has never given up any territory she has once occupied. If she 'surrenders' Shantung the surrender will be pro forma merely; she has already clearly manifested her intention to keep the oyster when she returns the shell. We remember Korea. OUR INTEREST IN SIBERIA.

"In addition to this purely selfish national interest, the United States has another and larger interest in preserving Siberia's integrity and freedom from Japanese domination. It is by no means certain as yet that Germany has undergone any real reform; that she has permanently abandoned the aggressive

The final collapse of the Kolchak